

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03

INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03 SP-02

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 L-03 ITC-01 AGR-05 IO-13

OIC-02 STR-04 CEA-01 SS-15 NSC-05 FEA-01 /103 W

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R 281552Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4930

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FOR ARA/AND, AID/CFS AND ARA/CU

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, PFOR, TGEN, VE

SUBJECT: U.S.-VENEZUELAN COORDINATIVE MECHANISM ON TECHNICAL
COOPERATION PROJECTS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING FOR SOME TIME
TO DESTABLISH A BILATERAL WORKING GROUP WITH THE GOV TO DEAL
WITH VARIOUS KINDS OF TECHNICAL, ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH CORDIPLAN AND NOW HAVE
THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH A COORDINATIVE MECHANISM WITH
THAT MINISTRY TO CONSIDER TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECTS.
WE BELIEVE THIS GROUP MIGHT EVENTUALLY DEVELOP INTO A
MORE COMPREHENSIVE ORGANIZATION IN WHICH THE STATE OF
THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN THIS GENERAL AREA MAY BE
ADDRESSED. THE SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGES IN PROMOTING COUNTRY
FINANCED SERVICES AND THE LONG-TERM ADVANTAGE OF A STRUCTURE
WITHIN WHICH WE CAN DISCUSS BILATERAL MATTERS ARE OBVIOUS.
THE PITFALLS ARE ALSO EVIDENT IN THAT CORDIPLAN SEES THIS AS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK A GREATER U.S. COMMITMENT TO
VENEZUELAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. BECAUSE OF THE NET
ADVANTAGES, HOWEVER, WE ASK THAT THE DEPARTMENT TAKE
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PARTICULAR PAINS WITH THE MINISTRY'S FIRST PROJECT OF SEEKING

INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY BY SENDING TECHNICIANS TO THE U.S.
FOR ON-THE-JOB TRAINING SESSIONS AT INDUSTRIAL
INSTALLATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. A MISSION OBJECTIVE OF LONG STANDING HAS BEEN TO DEVELOP A BILATERAL WORK GROUP WITH THE GOV. ALTERNATIVELY, WE HAVE SOUGHT A COOPERATIVE MECHANISM TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR THE EMBASSY AND THE GOV ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECTS WHICH MIGHT EVENTUALLY DEVELOP INTO A MORE COMPREHENSIVE GROUP IN WHICH THE STATE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP IN GENERAL ECONOMIC, DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY FIELDS MIGHT BE ADDRESSED. THE MINISTRY FOR COORDINATION AND PLANNING (CORDIPLAN) HAS BEEN A PRIME TARGET IN THIS REGARD BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL FOR ACCESS TO OTHER AGENCIES OF THE GOV AS A RESULT OF ITS PRESCRIBED COORDINATING ROLE IN THE VENEZUELAN BUREAUCRACY.

3. DURING HIS FIRST CALL ON THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR COORDINATION AND PLANNING GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ, THE AMBASSADOR RAISED THE QUESTION OF A COORDINATIVE GROUP AND STRUCK AN IMMEDIATELY RESPONSIVE CHORD SINCE THE MINISTER, AS WE HAVE BEEN AWARE FROM PAST CONTACTS, HAS BEEN THINKING OF JUST SUCH A MECHANISM FOR SOME TIME. A SUBSEQUENT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING WAS HELD BETWEEN THE DCM, THE NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY, NAPOLEON BRICENO, AND THE STAFF OF THE DIVISION OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION. IT WAS DECIDED THAT THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE MEETING WOULD BE HELD ON OCTOBER 20, DURING WHICH, AMONG OTHER TOPICS, THE COUNTRY FINANCED SERVICES' PROGRAM, THE GRAN MARISCAL DE AYACUCHO PROGRAM AND THE PROGRAM DESCRIBED BELOW WILL BE DISCUSSED.

4. MINISTER RODRIGUEZ HAS AN IDEA FOR A PROGRAM TO IMPROVE VENEZUELAN INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTIVITY. HE PROPOSES TO SEND BETWEEN 180-240 TECHNICIANS AND SPECIALIZED WORKERS TO THE U.S. FOR ON-THE-JOB TRAINING SESSIONS AT INDUSTRIAL INSTALLATIONS FOR PERIODS OF 3-6 MONTHS. THE FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION WOULD BE METALLURGY, METAL WORKING, PETROCHEMICALS, CONSTRUCTION, TEXTILES AND PLASTICS. WE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GATHER THAT THE CONCEPT IS STILL IN EMBRYONIC STAGE AND WE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HEAR MORE AT THE OCTOBER 20 MEETING. IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS, WE INFORMED CORDIPLAN THAT THIS STUCK US AS A VERY AMBITIOUS PROJECT. WE DISCARDED IMMEDIATELY ANY POSSIBILITY OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE FINANCING. WE ALSO SAID THAT WE ARE NOT CERTAIN AID/CFS STRUCTURE COULD HANDLE THE ADMINISTRATION OF SUCH A PROGRAM AND WE MIGHT HAVE

TO EXAMINE OUTSIDE INSTITUTIONS, INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS, ETC. DESPITE THE FACT THAT NO U.S. FINANCING WAS AVAILABLE, CORDIPLAN SAID THAT U.S. ASSISTANCE TO SEEK THE RIGHT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK TO ADMINISTER AND MONITOR THE PROGRAM WOULD BE AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION ON OUR PART TOWARDS ASSISTING IN VENEZUELA'S FIRST PRIORITY, THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES. WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE STEAM BEHIND THIS PROJECT AND CONSIDER THAT WE SHOULD BE AS FORTHCOMING AND HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S AND AID'S ADVICE AS TO WHAT THE U.S. COULD USEFULLY DO TO ASSIST THE GOV IN THIS PROJECT. A PRELIMINARY REPORT BEFORE THE OCTOBER 20 MEETING WOULD BE VERY USEFUL.

5. WHILE WE ARE PLEASED BY THE STEPS TAKEN TO ESTABLISH A COORDINATIVE GROUP, WE ARE ALSO AWARE OF THE PITFALLS. BEYOND THE COORDINATIVE ASPECT, MINISTER GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ OBVIOUSLY SEES THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEEK GREATER U.S. RESOURCES FOR VENEZUELAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. ALSO, THE VENEZUELANS HAVE GOTTEN INTO THE HABIT OF THINKING BIG. WE NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE THAT THE SHORT-TERM BENEFITS WITH REGARD TO PROMOTING THE COUNTRY FINANCED SERVICES' PROGRAM AND THE LONGER-TERM VALUE OF HAVING A FORUM IN WHICH THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP MAY BE ADDRESSED ARE DETERMINING FACTORS. WE CONSIDER THE STEPS TAKEN SO FAR USEFUL BUT ARE AWARE THAT, PARTICULARLY IN THE EARLY STAGES, THE VALUE OF THE NECHANISM FOR THE GOV MUST BE PROVED. THEREFORE, WE ASK THAT PARTICULAR PAINS BE TAKEN TO COME TO TERMS WITH THIS FIRST PROJECT PROPOSED BY MINISTER RODRIGUEZ.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE WOULD APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S AND AID'S ADVICE AS TO WHAT THE U.S. COULD USEFULLY DO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO ASSIST THE GOV IN THIS PROJECT. A PRELIMINARY REPORT BEFORE THE OCTOBER 20 MEETING WOULD BE VERY USEFUL.
VAKY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TECHNOLOGICAL EXCHANGES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CARACA11555
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760366-0522
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760914/aaaaalfm.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: U.S.-VENEZUELAN COORDINATIVE MECHANISM ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECTS
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, TGEN, VE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006